

Food Poisoning Fact Sheet

What is Food Poisoning?

Food poisoning is usually caused by eating food contaminated by germs (bacteria) or the toxins (poisons) that they produce. Food poisoning is most likely to occur in the summer when warm weather encourages the growth of germs in contaminated food or water.

If you have food poisoning you may be experiencing all or some of the following symptoms:-

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Stomach Ache
- Fever
- Fatigue

The symptoms can take 2-72 hours to develop after eating the contaminated food, but varies depending on the germ or toxin involved.

Why have I been contacted by the Environmental Health Department?

Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) have a duty to investigate cases of food poisoning.

They want to find out:

- What type of food poisoning you are suffering from.
- Where and how you may have been infected to prevent others getting ill.
- To give advice in preventing you passing the infection to other people.

What information will the Environmental Health Officer require?

The Environmental Health Officer will require details of:

- The person who is ill
- Their occupation
- Other occupants in the household
- The food you ate before you became ill, and where the food was eaten
- The symptoms you experienced
- Whether you have travelled abroad recently

The EHO may also require faecal specimens from you and members of the family.

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